

middle-men and firms of distributors exact the largest possible profit for themselves? Is not this the principle on which all industry is based? Has it not been laid down by the great classical economists that in so doing, in following, that is, their own personal interests, they will, in the long run, promote the interests of the community as a whole? Clearly men follow their own interests when they combine to fix prices, or more closely to pool their resources and cut down their overhead costs. Therefore, what can be wrong and why are they attacked by, of all newspapers, the *Morning Post*? Sir Edmund Vestey has indeed the right to exclaim "*Et tu Brute!*" Yet, as a matter of fact, we all instinctively feel that the *Morning Post* is right when it throws the light of publicity on the whole business. The *Post* must remember, however, that its whole inquiry is based on an assumption that it might not be prepared to recognize in other spheres of industry and commerce; and that is that the economic activity of food storage and distribution should be carried on, not in the interest of the shareholders in the distributing companies, but in the interests of the public. It may be objected that these two interests will always in the long run coincide. But can we, in modern conditions, when combination has so largely taken the place of competition, be sure that they will coincide? It is useless to abuse the Trust, the Combine, and the Monopoly. They often provide much more efficient service to the public than that of a number of small competing firms. But we must readjust our economic theory to the new conditions which they create.

AMERICA REVISITED

III.—THE NEGRO PROBLEM

BY JULIAN S. HUXLEY

NOT until you have lived in the Southern States, or at least lived somewhere in contact with Western-veneer negroes, can you realize at all adequately what the negro problem means to America.

Even when you stop only a few minutes in some little country town where the blacks outnumber the whites, you are apt to experience a queer feeling—of insecurity, of familiar worlds upset. That is an almost instinctive reaction, a reaction to the obvious visible differences between black and white.

On further acquaintance you find that the differences go deeper. The negro mind is as different from the white mind as the negro from the white body. The old characterization "the minds of children" is perfectly true. The typical negro servant, for instance, is wonderful with children for the reason that she really enjoys doing the things that children do. She is grown up and strong and can look after them: but she enjoys the sort of story that you find in children's books, likes to talk and play around in the way that children do. The race has the child's love of bright colours: a negro buck with Reckitt's blue trousers, Colman's mustard shirt, ox-blood tan shoes, and a face like a polished grate is a grand sight!

They have the child's love for romantic and high-sounding names. I once had a "wash-lady" called Aunt Minerva, and recently came across black sisters called Geneva and Verona; while the story of the coloured lady who wanted to call all her girls after flowers and, after a temporary check in hunting for a name for the seventh, had the bright idea of "Artificial," is at least *ben trovato*.

They have the child's passion for dressing up and imitating their so-called betters. On some railroads, coloured men who wear spectacles are

not allowed as porters—because nine-tenths of the spectacle-wearing was not due to bad eyesight but to a desire to look white and intelligent; and I am credibly informed that there exists a flourishing industry for the manufacture of gold pseudo-stoppings for affixion to perfectly sound negro teeth.

They are often childlike in their intellects. I used occasionally to stay with a Southern friend who used his cook as an exhibition and object-lesson to doctrinaires from New England. "Bring me a saucer, Julia," he would say, after a discussion on racial equality; and Julia always appeared with a saucer, a small plate, and an apology for disremembering which was which. The worthy Julia was an excellent cook at sixteen, also the mother of an illegitimate child, and she could not count above four; and I cannot refrain from quoting one of her remarks made to my friend's prim maiden aunt who enquired what the noise had been in her cabin that afternoon—"I don't rightly remember if it was my brother trying to throttle me for sassing him, or another lady having a baby . . ."

You have only to go to a nigger camp-meeting to see the African mind in operation—the shrieks, the dancing and yelling and sweating, the surrender to the most violent emotion, the ecstatic blending of the soul of the Congo with the practice of the Salvation Army. So far, no very satisfactory psychological measure has been found for racial differences: that will come, but meanwhile the differences are patent.

But there is another side to the picture. Some eleven million "coloured people" live in the United States—about 10 per cent. of the population. But this "coloured" 10 per cent. is by no means all black. Theoretically in the United States everyone with a negro anywhere in his or her ancestry is a negro, so that the offspring of all crosses is penned below the colour line. Actually, a certain proportion of very pale cross-breeds manage to pass themselves off as white. There used to be a negro secret society which took upon itself the task of getting the occasional very white babies, who Mendelianly segregate from the marriages of pale mulattoes, palmed off as white; and it is an interesting fact that the American negroes show an unusually large deficit of males as compared with females, apparently because more men than women succeed in thus "whitening themselves."

This reverse leak, however, does not begin to compensate for the flow of white blood into the nominally coloured race: and this admixture has enormously aggravated the problem.

In the first place, the purely physical type appears to be upset. Although the matter is not wholly settled, most biological authorities, such as Davenport, believe that what we should a priori expect is actually true—namely, that Mendelian recombination of the two sets of factors which co-operatively build up the well-adapted negro and Caucasian type respectively, gives rise to all sorts of disharmonious organisms. Then there is the undoubted fact that by putting some of the white man's mind into the mulatto you not only make him more capable and more ambitious (there are no well-authenticated cases of pure blacks rising to any eminence), but you increase his discontent and create an obvious injustice if you continue to treat him like any full-blooded African. The American negro is making trouble because of the American white blood that is in him.

Everyone knows the condition of things in the past. Slavery: freedom and carpet-bagging followed by

Jim-Crow-ism and the turning of freedom and equality into empty names: discontent and friction: lynchings.

But recently a new phase of the problem has opened out. Since the War, a northward migration of negroes has set in. Like most things in life, this movement has many causes. Partly that the negro soldiers, returned from the greater freedom and dignity which the War gave them, refused to accept race-discrimination as easily as before; partly the labour shortage in the post-War boom, and now the restriction of immigration; partly that the more unforgiving of the leading coloured men encouraged the migration to the utmost as a way to ruin and be revenged upon the South; partly a general restlessness. In any event, over a million negroes have come north—between 12 and 20 per cent. of the South's black population—and they are still coming, though not quite at the same rate. There is a large Black Belt in Chicago; and as its inhabitants become prosperous they invade white residential districts, in spite of threats and even bombs. Ohio towns are full of them; their numbers have enormously increased in Philadelphia and even in New York. It is a race migration on a vast scale, comparable in modern days only to those floods of Southern and Eastern Europeans which roused the United States to their restrictive immigration policy.

What is going to be the result? It is impossible as yet to tell fully; but there are one or two special consequences which are interesting. In the first place, the Middle Westerner and to a less extent the Yankee are for the first time experiencing the negro in bulk and at first hand; and there is a certain grim humour in seeing their high moral principles and lovely theoretic equalitarianism dissolving under the strain. In most negro-invaded northern towns "Jim Crow" restrictions have come into being—either as law or, quite as efficiently, as extra-legal practice. There have been race-riots in Chicago and elsewhere. In spite of their new black citizens easing the labour situation, the North on the whole definitely does not like them, and is showing it.

The South meanwhile is anxious, very anxious, about its own labour situation. It was taken for granted that the negro must live where he had always lived; but when he goes, the vacuum is abhorred. The South is trying to retain him, by persuasion, by cajolery, by force, by higher wages. There is little doubt that the northern migration will mean betterment for the blacks who stay south.

There is also an attempt to fill the vacuum with another "inferior race"—the Mexicans. There is no immigration quota for Mexicans any more than for other peoples of the American continent. But there are strict laws as to the literacy and other qualifications of all immigrants, which would keep out 95 per cent. of Mexican labourers. However, the frontier is immense and human smuggling easy, and, legally or otherwise (usually otherwise), the Mexicans continue to pour in.

All this has only served to alter and perhaps to complicate the problem: but the problem itself is still there. What will happen to the eleven million "Afro-Americans," as the coloured intelligentsia like (and with some justice) to call the negroes? In the first place, let us note with relief that, contrary to much popular belief, they are *not* increasing faster than the whites. There is further some evidence that they tend to die off more rapidly in the North. On the other hand, this mortality will assuredly be selective, and will assuredly bear harder on the coal-black negro than on the mulatto. It will not solve the problem.

There are various alternatives. To ship them all back to Africa. Yes, but which part of Africa would accept them, and where are the ships that would carry them? The idea is more ridiculous than reparations! Among the negroes themselves, many would prefer Brazil as a land of promise; but Brazil has immigration laws which keep negroes out, and it is unlikely, to put it mildly, that the United States would invent a super-Monroe doctrine to force her to take them in.

To continue on the present lines of theoretical equality; but the equality is so very theoretical, the racial prejudice so very strong and deeply-grounded—and not without a good deal of sound social and biological instinct, in spite of its frequently unfortunate manifestations. This may be the *pis aller*; but if so trouble will continue for a long, long time.

To try some form of regional segregation, giving over whole areas to the negroes in which they would be dominant and exclusive; but again, who will plan and execute the necessary expatriation of whites? And would such a black *imperium in imperio* be either practicable or safe? Perhaps some degree of partial segregation will help—the *de facto* recognition of negro wards or townships or counties, the creation of a public sentiment which would regard such places, not as a danger, but as a help.

But in none of these ways would the problem be settled. Dr. Gregory, in his presidential address to the Geographers at the British Association this summer, made yet another suggestion. The northward migration of the southern negro has begun, and will not stop for some time: there are also some signs of a townward migration of the country negro. Into the economic void thus produced Mexicans are, as we have seen, already being sucked in. It is probable that the process will continue, and further, that many immigrants from Southern Europe who are now north of the Mason-Dixon line will be drawn south. They are more adapted to the heat than the North European stocks, and many of them will welcome the country after factory life. But the South European stocks appear to have no particular prejudice against intermarriage with coloured races; and if they invade the South, it is at least on the cards that miscegenation on a large scale will occur, so that a great part of the population will be neither North European, South European, Central American, Spanish, nor Indian, nor Negro, but a new blended stock. This would take time; but if it ever did occur, it would be impossible to draw a sharp colour line, and the United States might be forced to divide itself into two main regions, one in the South where there was no distinction of colour, and one in the North where the negro could be kept out, or at least allowed no privileges. Only so could segregation become a reality.

This may sound chimerical. All one can say is that stranger things have happened in the world before now. Meanwhile the problem is acute and likely to remain so for some time. Let it not be forgotten that much of the white blood that is now doomed to circulate below the colour-line derives, through illicit unions, from the most aristocratic stock in America—the Southern planters. The bulk of the Southern negroes despised and still despise the "poor white trash" that vegetates through the malaria-plus-hookworm belt.

The Afro-American of mixed stock is often able, and can feel deeply. At a recent congress of negroes one of the speakers said that the time had come for the negroes to make for themselves a new religion, with a black God and white devils. How Voltaire would have enjoyed the remark! But slavery has indeed brought its own nemesis.